

WASHINGTON, DC --- Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) cautioned the Bush Administration against making changes to power plant regulations that would gut a vital part of the Clean Air Act. The Administration is expected to give an early Christmas present to power plant companies tomorrow when the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy come to a final decision on the New Source Review (NSR) program of the 1970 Clean Air Act.

"If the Administration makes these changes, it will be yet another example of the Bush Administration weakening laws that protect our environment and public health," said Blumenauer. "For over a year I have raised publicly my concerns about the lax voluntary program that Bush implemented in Texas when he was Governor. It did not accelerate clean air improvements, it just allowed the dirtiest plants to continue polluting. If similar measures are adopted at the federal level, it could have tragic consequences for all Americans who breathe."

The NSR program requires the oldest and dirtiest "grandfathered" power plants to install the pollution control devices required for modern plants when they make major modifications that substantially increase pollution. The Administration's proposed changes could effectively strip the program, allowing power plants to modernize their equipment without adding pollution controls. In Oregon, the changes to the Clean Air Act could allow power plants to double their emissions of nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide, two pollutants that are associated with a variety of serious health impacts including increased asthma attacks and even premature death.

"At a time when the negative health impacts of pollution are becoming more apparent, Congress and the Administration should be focused on cleaning up our air, not rolling back environmental regulations," said Blumenauer.

For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's work on clean air and the environment, visit his web site at <http://www.house.gov/blumenauer/>.